

CONNECTION

APRIL 2008

SMARTRIP CARDS PROVIDE SEAMLESS TRANSIT FARE SERVICE



In May 1999, Metro introduced the SmarTrip® fare card for its rail system and parking facilities.

Almost ten years later, the SmarTrip card is becoming

a permanent fixture for many transit operators and over 3,000,000 SmarTrip cards have been sold to date.

In an effort to create an integrated, seamless fare collection system, DRPT has supported the

implementation of SmarTrip cards on all transit systems in Northern Virginia. Regional operators have been gradually updating their equipment to SmarTrip enabled fareboxes, and the ultimate goal is to allow transit riders to travel from Fredericksburg to Baltimore with a single fare card on bus, commuter rail, light rail or heavy rail.

The rechargeable, plastic fare card is used like a traditional fare card, except that it is re-usable and can hold up to \$300 in fare value. The card affords speed and convenience by automatically deducting the appropriate fare, including any applicable discounts, when the card is swiped on the farebox reader.

SmarTrip cards can be purchased online at www.wmata.com/riding/online_sales.cfm or at Metro sales offices, retail outlets or commuter stores. Riders with existing balances on paper fare cards can transfer that value to a SmarTrip card. In addition, employers can assign the dollar value of employees' monthly commuting benefits directly to their SmarTrip cards online by using the new SmartBenefits® program, eliminating the need to distribute Metrocheks.

The following Virginia systems have implemented or are working to implement the SmarTrip fare card system: Alexandria DASH, Fairfax Connector, City of Fairfax CUE, Arlington Transit, PRTC and Loudoun County Commuter Buses. Virginia Railway Express is working toward integrating its fare system with SmarTrip to provide this option to their riders in the future.

For more information on the SmarTrip fare card system visit www.wmata.com/riding/smartrip.cfm.



DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Welcome to the second issue of Connection, DRPT's new bi-monthly newsletter. You'll notice that Connection provides features and facts about multiple modes of transportation. That's because

Virginia's transportation needs are as diverse as its population. It is important that we provide access to several transportation choices to accommodate the movement of people and goods in the Commonwealth.

In the April issue, you'll read about how DRPT and service providers across the Commonwealth are working to meet Virginia's multimodal transportation needs. You will read about DRPT's efforts to improve rail capacity in the Richmond area and expand access to transit throughout Virginia. You will learn how various transit operators are working to enhance their services and improve options for their customers. You will read about DRPT studies and planning efforts to prepare for future transportation needs.

And finally, you will learn about an upcoming opportunity to provide valuable feedback to DRPT about what you hope to see included in the Statewide Rail Plan and Statewide Transit Plan. I hope you enjoy reading the second issue of Connection, and feel free to send us your business news for future issues at drptpr@drpt.virginia.gov.



PHASE ONE COMPLETE FOR NEW CULPEPER TRANSIT COMPLEX

Virginia Regional Transit (VRT) completed work on phase one of its new transportation complex in Culpeper in January. Phase one includes the bus bay and wash station, maintenance shop and mechanic area. The second phase, scheduled for completion this fall, includes an administrative and training building. Once complete, the new transit complex will be the headquarters for Culpeper Connector and VRT's administrative operations.



DRPT PERFORMANCE

During the second reporting quarter of FY08, DRPT met all performance measures included in the management scorecard for Virginia Performs.

Criteria on the scorecard include human resource management, government procurement, financial management, technology, performance management and resource stewardship.

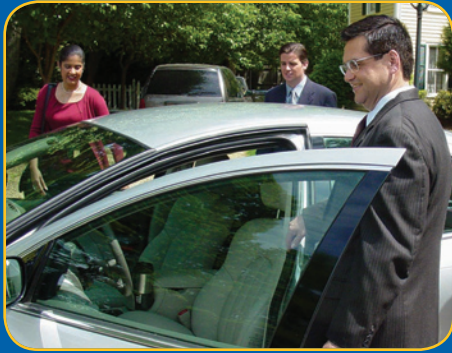
DRPT STUDIES RICHMOND AREA RAIL IMPROVEMENTS

Heavy rail traffic and capacity constraints create congestion for both passenger and freight rail operations through Richmond. DRPT is evaluating several methods to improve capacity and traffic flow through Richmond as well as alternative routing options south of Richmond and east of the current I-95 rail corridor. DRPT is currently identifying important environmental, engineering and other relevant factors to be considered in an Environmental Assessment.



DRPT AND SENIORNAVIGATOR PARTNER TO IMPROVE ACCESS

DRPT and SeniorNavigator, a national provider of aging and disability resources, have formed a partnership to create a statewide web-based transportation resource. SeniorNavigator combines online assistance with a network of volunteers to provide resources for seniors, caregivers, adults with disabilities and their families. DRPT and SeniorNavigator will work together to populate the SeniorNavigator Web site with information from all transit operators in the Commonwealth. The goal is to provide a one-stop shop for residents and visitors to learn more about transportation services available in any given area of Virginia. This effort, in combination with the statewide human service transportation plan, will help achieve a cohesive and universally accessible transportation network for elderly and disabled citizens in the Commonwealth. The service is scheduled to be available in July 2008.



DRPT REVIEWS STATE OF THE COMMUTE STUDY RESULTS

In 2001 and 2004, the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOC) administered surveys to assess commuting trends and attitudes in Northern Virginia. In 2007, DRPT administered the same survey statewide to gain information from all markets not covered in the MWCOC survey. The results, along with MWCOC's 2007 results, will be combined to provide a snapshot of the current statewide commuting situation and additional perspective on the similarities and differences in mature and evolving commuter markets. The report is scheduled for completion this summer.

DRPT SEEKS INPUT FOR STATEWIDE RAIL AND TRANSIT PLANS

DRPT is developing a Statewide Rail Plan and a Statewide Transit Plan to provide a clear, long-range vision and strategy to address rail and transit needs in the Commonwealth. Each plan will include a six-year short term action plan and a 2035 long term vision plan to support the Commonwealth's rail and transit goals. DRPT will seek public comments regarding priorities for inclusion in these plans during the spring Six-Year

Improvement Plan (SYIP) public hearings. The spring SYIP meetings also provide an opportunity for public comment on all projects to be included in the SYIP for fiscal years 2009-2014. The meetings began on April 16 and will conclude May 14. A detailed schedule is available online at <http://www.drpt.virginia.gov/news>.



FEDERAL NEWS

- The National Surface Transportation Policy and Revenue Study Commission recently released its final report, which outlines recommendations to create a surface transportation policy to address key issues and plan for growth. The report recommends a comprehensive, performance-based approach to policies and funding decisions, a reformed process to build projects faster, a national strategic plan to guide investments, and the creation of a commission to recommend policy and funding strategies to Congress. More information can be found at www.transportationfortomorrow.org.
- In February, the Federal Railroad Administration published a notice of intent to receive grant applications for passenger rail corridor projects that are ready to advance into construction. The program provides \$30 million in funding for projects and requires a 50 percent state match.
- President Bush issued his proposed FY09 Budget Bill on February 4, 2008. Transit funding as a whole was reduced from \$10.3 billion to \$10.1 billion. The bill proposed \$175 million for strategies to reduce highway congestion through road pricing, and proposed the transfer of an estimated \$3.2 billion dedicated for transit to fund highway projects. The final installment of the \$286.4 billion package of highway, transit, and safety program spending agreed upon in the last surface transportation reauthorization act was proposed in the bill, as was \$191 million for the Federal Railroad Administration's safety program. More information can be found at www.whitehouse.gov/omb/budget/fy2009

CONNECTION



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DID YOU KNOW...

- STAR Transit broke ground on the construction of their new transit facility in Onley, VA on February 13.



- The Town of Orange held a ribbon cutting ceremony on February 29 to celebrate the introduction of new trolley buses to the town's transit service.

- On April 26, Virginia transit drivers will come to Williamsburg for the annual CTAV Driving Rodeo where they will participate in a driving obstacle course, wheelchair handling assessments and a short written test.
- DRPT has begun working with the VDOT Multimodal office on the Route 29 Corridor Study, which will develop a long-range vision for the corridor that defines specific rail, transit and highway improvements to help manage the growth of traffic congestion. The study is scheduled for completion in November 2009.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- 4/22–23** Connecting Communities Public Transportation Emergency Preparedness Workshop
Chesapeake, Virginia (sponsored by DRPT)
- 4/16, 4/21, 4/23, 4/24, 4/30, 5/14** SYIP Public Hearings and Comment Opportunity for Statewide Rail and Transit Plans. Visit www.drpt.virginia.gov for locations.
- 4/26** CTAV Driving Rodeo, Williamsburg, Virginia (sponsored by DRPT)
- 5/3–7** APTA Bus & Paratransit Conference and International Bus Rodeo, Austin, Texas
- 5/4–8** AASHTO Spring Meeting, Branson, Missouri
- 5/14–16** Women's Transportation Seminar 2008 Annual Conference, Atlanta, Georgia
- 6/1–4** APTA Rail Conference
San Francisco, California
- 6/8–10** Northeast Association of States Transportation Officials Meeting, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania
- 6/22–27** APTA National Transportation Management Conference, Orlando, Florida